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24 July 53

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
14 July 1953

CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT EVENTS IN THE SOVIET ORBIT

27 June L. P. Beria failed to attend the opera performance at the Bolshoi Theatre with other Presidium members. Also absent were M. D. A. Bagirov, who is an alternate member of the Presidium and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR, and L. G. Melnikov, who was last listed as an alternate member of the Presidium and who was expelled from the Ukrainian Communist Party on 13 June.

27 June Several Soviet tanks seen proceeding along Moscow streets.

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27 June Czech government instituted installment buying plan for workers.

27-28 June Hungarian Workers Party reorganized at top. Comparable to streamlining of Soviet Communist Party following Stalin's death. May presage similar moves in other Satellites. Politburo greatly reduced. Old Secretariat replaced by three-man group. Premier Rakosi on both. Personnel changes has brought to top a younger, stronger, more cohesive group of men.

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28 June Soviet Minister of Finance Zverev denied in Pravda that there was any basis for rumors of a new currency reform.

28 June Negotiations for resumption of Soviet-Israeli relations reportedly completed in Sofia.

State Department review completed

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28 June Hungarian editorial severely criticized officials responsible for harsh 1952 crop collection quotas.

29 June Byelorussian Minister of Internal Affairs, M. I. Baskakov, replaced by M. F. Dechka.

29 June Molotov reportedly affirmed Moscow's willingness to settle outstanding differences with Iran.

29 June Rumania agreed with Yugoslavia to the establishment of mixed commissions to solve frontier incidents.

29 June Polish students reportedly staged anti-regime demonstrations and textile workers were on sit-down strike; both incidents in Lodz.

29 June Hungarian propaganda broadcast was devoted to questions of and need for renewed stress on internal vigilance which must be redoubled. Tied in with events in East Germany.

30 June Soviet ambassadors to the US and UK, Zarubin and Malik, both alternate members to the Central Committee (CPSU) suddenly left their posts for Moscow.

30 June Communists unofficially rejected General Clark's 29 June proposal, Pyongyang radio stating that Clark gave "no guarantee" as to Rhee's future conduct and reaffirming the demand for recovery of the prisoners.

30 June Hungarian press reported foreign plane dropped anti-regime leaflets.

30 June Hungarian government announced price reduction of certain articles of clothing by as much as one third.

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Late June Molotov rebuffed Austrian overtures to discuss the return of Soviet-held factories and to explore the prospects of a state treaty.

June-July Satellite propaganda continued to be anti-US.

June-July Minor incidents continued along Satellite frontiers with Yugoslavia.

June-July Many high ranking Soviet diplomats in USSR.

Early July Rumanian Premier Gheorghiu-Dej believed to have left for Moscow.

Early July West German-Soviet trade talks scheduled to begin in Bern.

1 July USSR dropped its efforts to modify existing corridors to Berlin.

1 July Czech government decreed harsh measures to halt absenteeism.

2 July USSR-Argentine trade negotiations reportedly concluded.

4 July Hungarian government reorganization and announcement of significant relaxation in socialization program.

4 July Vyshinsky told Ambassador Bohlen that an armistice in Korea was of the greatest importance and expressed his conviction that the US would be able to overcome its difficulties with the South Korean government.

4 July Soviet ambassador to India Benediktov, who is a full member of the Central Committee, presented his credentials in New Delhi.

5 July Announcement of release of foodstuffs in Rumania.

5 July Ukrainian Central Committee issued report on measures to increase production and improve quality of consumer goods and public servicing.

6 July Czech government reversed 1 July measures to halt absenteeism.

6 July USSR proposed top-ranking Soviet diplomat (Lavrentiev) as ambassador to Iran.

6 July US embassy in Warsaw denied unrest and martial law in Poland.

8 July Pravda announced existence of additional reserves of 20 billion rubles in excess of the envisaged annual plan for consumer goods turnover.

8 July In their reply to General Clark's 29 June letter, the Communists agreed to a meeting of truce delegations "to discuss the question of implementation of the armistice agreement and the various preparations prior to the signing of the armistice." They demanded that the UN Command take "effective steps" regarding the observance by the South Korean government and Army of the armistice agreement and all other related agreements.

9 July USSR ended travel restrictions imposed after riots in Berlin, despite previous refusal to do so until West gave guarantees to prevent further entry of "provocateurs."

9 July East German government announced that the vast majority of rioters arrested in East Germany had been freed. (Apparently in answer to strikers demands.)

10 July Announcement of Beria's arrest. Charged with:
1) attempt to undermine Soviet state in interests of foreign capital. 2) attempts to seize power by using MVD organs. 3) appointing MVD personnel on the basis of loyalty to himself. 4) impeding decisions pertaining to agricultural problems and the liquidation of arbitrary actions. 5) attempting to change the party's policy to a "capitulatory policy" which would have brought about the restoration of capitalism. 6) undermining friendship of USSR peoples.

10 July Pravda editorial reporting Beria's arrest and the decisions of the Central Committee and the Presidium for his demotion, again pointed out that the Soviet government has "stated more than once that all unsolved international questions under dispute can be solved by negotiations between the interested countries," and that "the new peaceful initiative demonstrated by the Soviet government has brought about the further strengthening of the international position of the Soviet Union and the growth of the authority of our country."

10 July Czech President Zapotocky, deputy prime minister Dolansky and defense minister Cepicka were rumored to be in Moscow.

10 July Bulgaria and Greece reportedly signed agreement on boundary disputes.

11 July Rakosi delivered a speech reaffirming Hungarian concessions of 4 July.

11 July Rumanian government announced cancellation of some agricultural debts charged to the peasants.

11 July Izvestia commented on Washington Foreign Ministers meeting by criticizing US preliminary conditions for high-level negotiations and citing differences between the US and its allies. This line is similar to the 24 May Pravda editorial answering Prime Minister Churchill's call for a four-power conference and criticizing plans for the Bermuda

conference. The only specific reference to East-West negotiations was Izvestia's claim that Washington politicians "failed to weaken in the West European countries the movement for the settlement of controversial international problems on the basis of negotiations with the Soviet Union."

11 July Moscow censors passed a despatch reporting that "foreign observers here thought on the basis of the Pravda and Izvestia editorials that Soviet domestic and foreign policy as conducted since the formation of the Malenkov government would continue unchanged and argued that Beria's activities as outlined in Pravda consisted precisely of sabotaging these policies."

11 July USSR and East German governments rejected the American offer to give \$15,000,000 in foodstuffs to relieve shortage in East Germany.

11 July

12 July Soviet newspapers report reception at Embassy Mongolian People's Republic attended by Molotov, Mikoyan, Marshall Zhukov and V. V. Kuznetsov. Presence of Zhukov indicates rumors his arrest unfounded.

13 July

The American Embassy in Moscow reports that

army officers including General Sinilov, Chief of the Moscow Garrison, and General Artemev, Commanding General of the Moscow Military District are under arrest.

14 July

Article in Moscow paper regarding a mass meeting of ministry personnel called to denounce Beria revealed the replacement of the Minister of Transport and Heavy Industry, V. A. Malyshev by I. Nosenko.